

CITY OF ANNAPOLIS



WATERWAYS AND HARBOR PLAN 2003

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Maryland Sea Grant
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Maryland Department of Natural Resources
4. "2002 Boating Facts and Figures at a Glance",
National Marine Manufacturers Association
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6. U. S. and Maryland Accident and Fatality Data 1989 - 2000,
U. S. Coast Guard
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II City Dock Design

A. Design Parameters

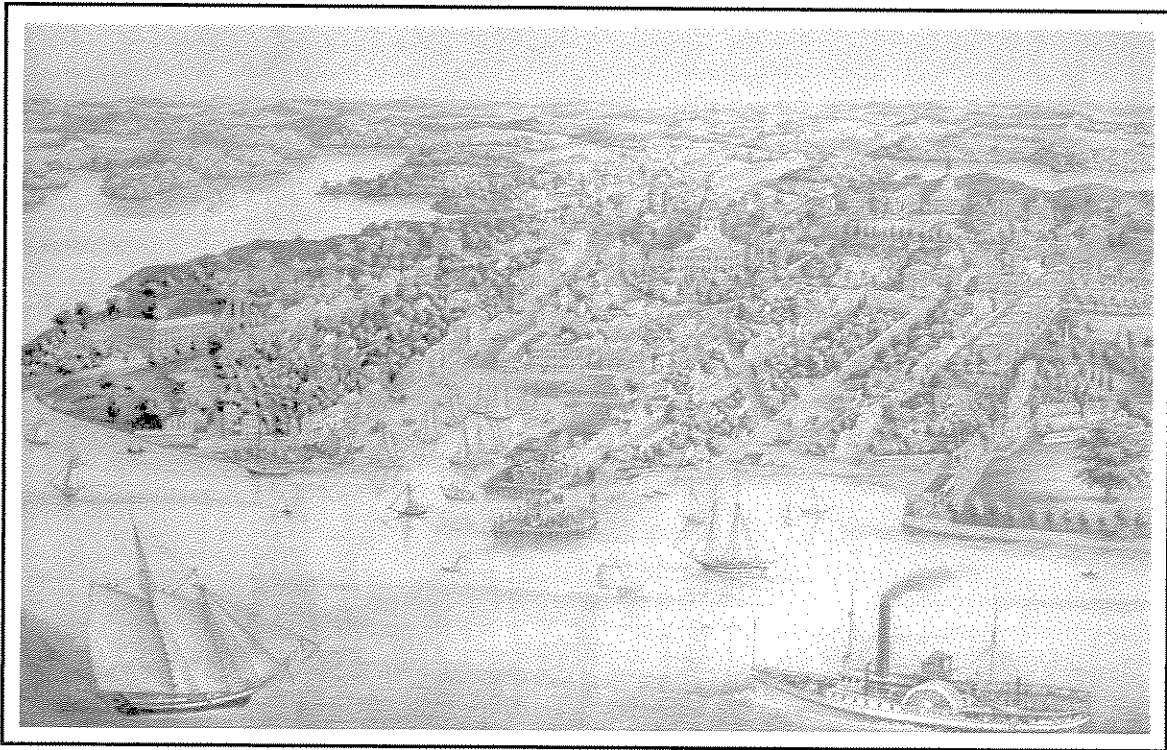
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1. Issues Survey and Preliminary Conceptual Designs

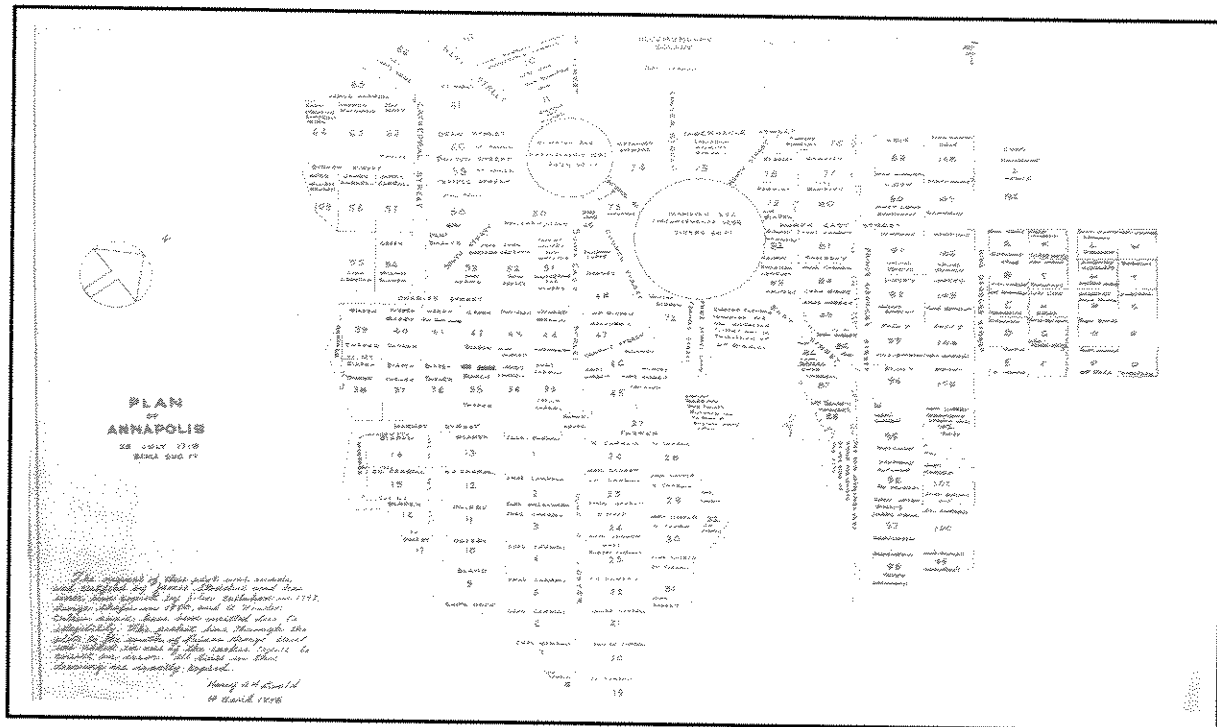
CITY DOCK

As a young eighteenth-century city with few roads, Annapolis depended upon the water for transportation and its commercial interaction with the rest of the world. The city's maritime focus was the City Dock and the Market Slip where cargoes were loaded and unloaded, processed and stored, sold on the spot or transported elsewhere. When the city was first designed, the commercial harbor followed the natural shoreline where a small parcel was set aside as "A Place for Landing on the Side of the City." Over the years, the public dock expanded as the harbor slip was filled in with debris, most of it oyster shell. The earliest maps depict a public landing and an area dominated by ship builders, coal and lumber yards, and oyster and crab houses. Photographs from the late nineteenth through the mid twentieth century show warehouses and workboats, ferry landings, oyster houses, parking lots and fuel storage tanks. Retail establishments and open air markets faced the working dock, and many of the surrounding homes provided modest housing for watermen and the workers for dock area businesses.

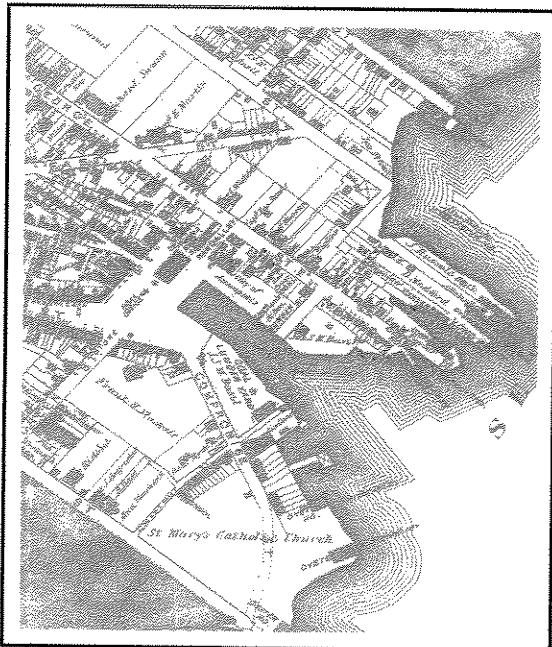


"Bird's Eye View of Annapolis" Edward Sachse, ca. 1858, with City Dock in center, foreground

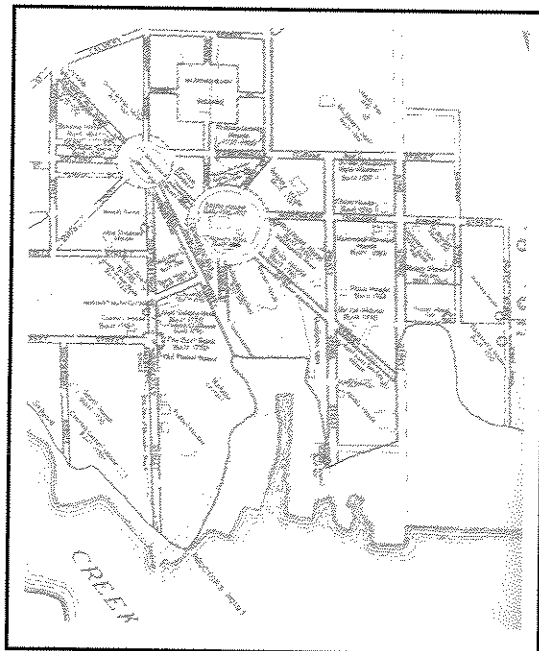
Annapolis' importance as a commercial port declined with the development of the Port of Baltimore, where the deeper water of the Patapsco River better accommodated larger and deeper draft vessels. The City Dock remained active as a ferry landing and home port for the local fishing fleets well into the mid-twentieth century, but the city's function as a distribution point for fish and shellfish disappeared with the collapse of the Chesapeake fisheries, and the Bay Bridge eliminated the need for passenger ferries.



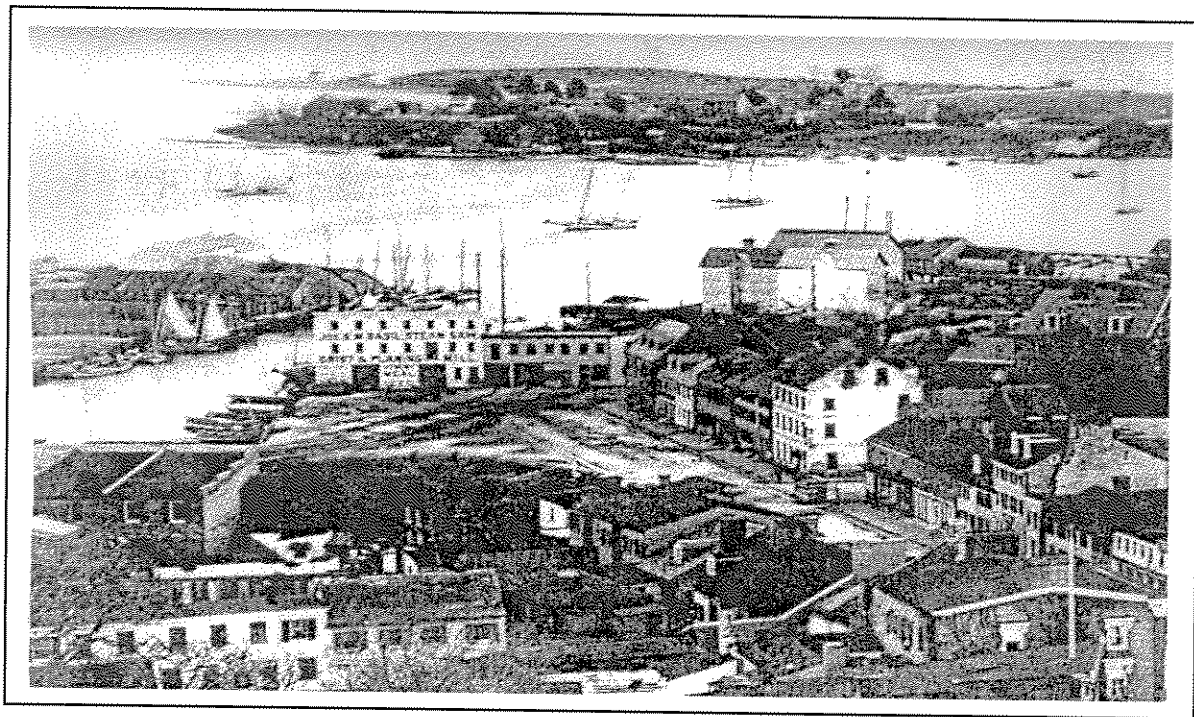
1956 Reproduction of 1718 "Plan of Annapolis". The Market Slip is originally much wider with the sliver of fast land between Prince George Street and the water dedicated "For Ships Carpenters Yard. A Place for Landing on the Side of the City"



City Dock, 1878 from Hopkins. Fill has expanded working areas while narrowing the Market Slip.



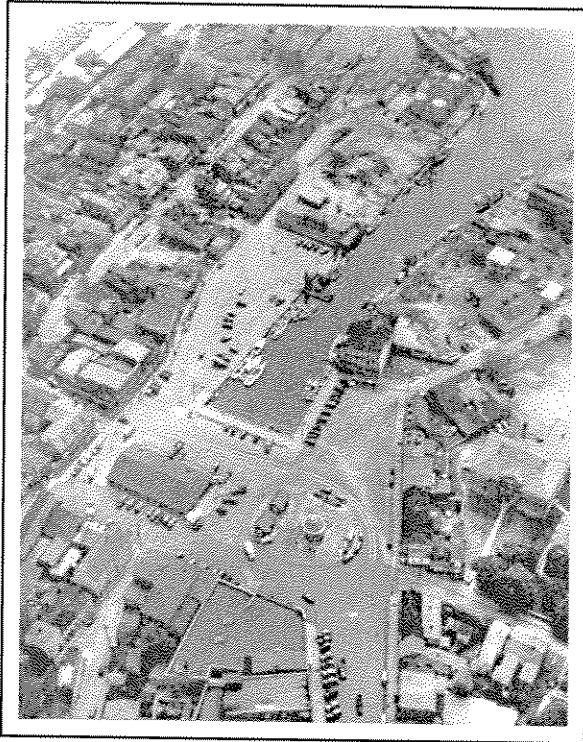
1936 Annapolis harbor shoreline with 1718 colonial shoreline superimposed to show the extent of fill. From "The Co. For the Restoration of Colonial Annapolis", State of Maryland, 1936.



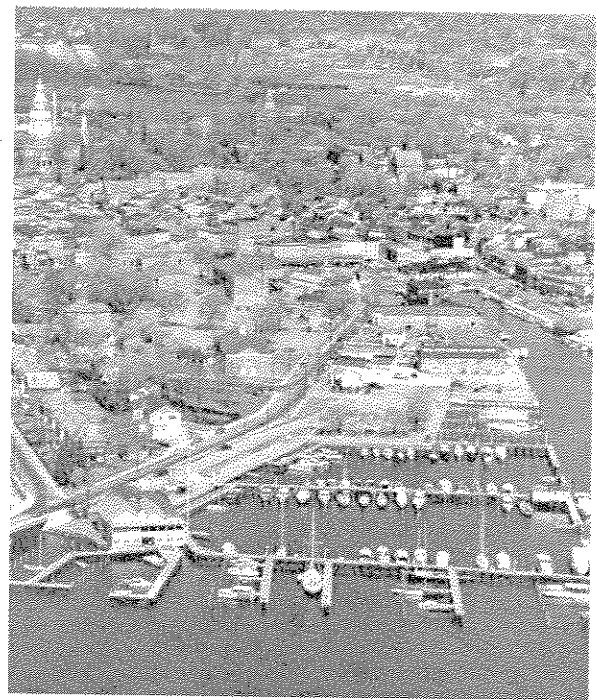
City Dock, ca. 1890. Photo, courtesy Maryland State Archives, Marion E. Warren Collection MSA SC 985-3308



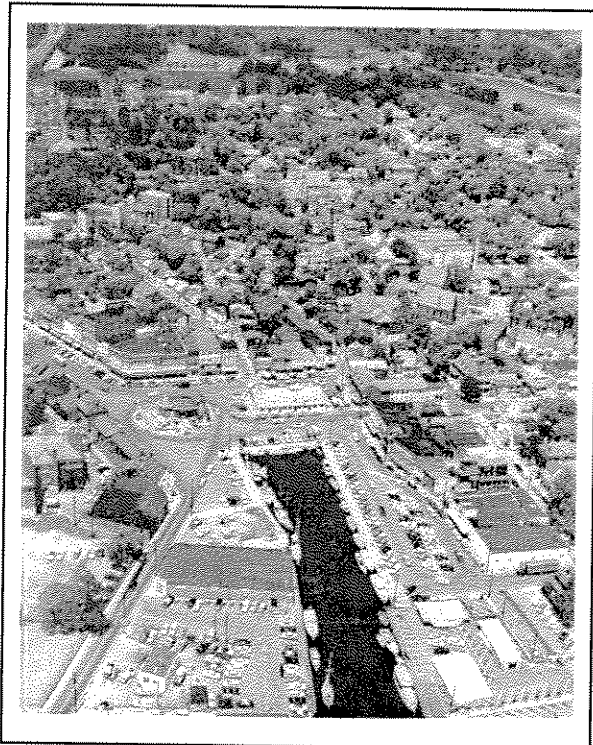
Oyster Fleet, City Dock 1955. Photo Courtesy of Maryland State Archives, The Annapolis That I Remember Collection, Mame Warren, MSA SC 2140. "At times there were so many workboats in the harbor that it was almost possible to reach Eastport by walking from deck to deck."



City Dock, ca. 1935-37. Photo courtesy Maryland State Archives, The Annapolis That I Remember Collection, Mame Warren, MSA SC 2140



City Dock, ca. 1955. Photo Courtesy of Maryland State Archives, The Annapolis That I Remember Collection, Mame Warren, MSA SC 2140



City Dock, 1965. Photo Courtesy of Maryland State Archives, The Annapolis That I Remember Collection, Mame Warren, MSA SC 2140

Between the mid 1950's when pleasure boating became popular in Annapolis and the mid 1960's when the downtown shopping district was still a preferred destination for city and county residents, the City Dock took the form that we recognize today: extensive parking areas surrounded by retail commercial uses. Gone are the warehouses and oyster packers, fuel storage tanks and lumber yards. Ferries have disappeared from the Chesapeake Bay and fishing fleets have been displaced by pleasure craft.

While the City Dock is no longer a focal point of local water-borne commerce, we are nonetheless left with those land use patterns established long ago. Once the existing configuration was established by the turn of the 20th century, the few changes in the layout of the City Dock area are for the most part related to automobiles. Prior to the 1960's when there were no shopping centers or malls on the outskirts of town, there was a need for centralized parking in the downtown shopping district, so vacant public land and unprofitable warehouses and factories were dedicated to parking. A gas station was installed in what was originally a park, then removed decades later. Memorial Circle was added to define traffic lanes, and Main Street was made one-way going out and Duke of Gloucester became one-way coming into town.

The other significant physical change in the City Dock's use relates to its popularity as recreational boating destination. Yachting in its earliest form was an activity for the wealthy, and the first Annapolis marina exclusively for pleasure yachts was built in the 1930's adjacent to City Dock. With the advent of affordable fiberglass water craft, pleasure boating in Annapolis began its precipitous rise in the 1950's and centered in the city's harbor. The City Dock now hosts numerous transient vessels seeking water access to Annapolis, and in effect operates as a heavily used public marina. Where local workboats once rafted together there are now slips occupied by vessels from around the world. The retail establishments surrounding the dock are still in place, but now cater almost exclusively to the needs of tourists and recreational boaters.

Responding to an increasingly robust tourism industry, the entire area from the Market House to the end of City Dock received a facelift in the 1970's that added planters, trees, benches and bricked sidewalks. But while the appearance of the City Dock was improved, its pedestrian and automobile circulation patterns remained the same. Today, the City Dock is frequently overwhelmed by people, cars and boats.



Annapolis City Dock, 2000

A. Design Parameters

The Annapolis City Dock has many uses: it functions as the platform for concerts, boat shows and festivals; a marina annually serving thousands of visiting vessels; the center of the Harbormaster's operations; a focus for Maryland's Natural Resource Police, the Bay Pilot, the Governor's yacht and several charter vessels; a plaza surrounded by thriving retail businesses; a popular vantage point for visual access to the Chesapeake Bay; a gathering place for school groups, tours, local residents and tourists. It is also a parking lot catering to local residents and those wanting easy pedestrian access to the historic district, and which, despite its size, is incapable of accommodating everyone. With multiple use demands and regular heavy automobile and pedestrian traffic, the City Dock requires a design that better addresses its uses while improving its efficiency and appearance.

The Subcommittee began its deliberations with a consultant-generated survey to determine consensus opinions on a wide variety of design elements. Two iterations of the final design were generated based upon the survey results and consequent discussions with the Subcommittee (See the Appendix for the survey and designs by Alt Breeding Schwarz Architects). The final design by ERM, Inc. derived from these earlier concept drawings.

The City Dock Design Subcommittee considered eliminating some of the parking area to expand the pedestrian open space - as suggested in the 1993 Ward One Sector Study - but declined to recommend that position until a parking alternative can be identified. The Subcommittee also seriously considered alternative traffic patterns. Although there is existing egress on Craig Street to Prince George Street and an on-demand traffic light at the Prince George/Randall Street intersection, the preferred access/egress point is at the Dock/Randall Street intersection opposite the Market House. This intersection functions poorly with heavy traffic, and is made worse by the constant flow of pedestrians using the cross walks that bracket the intersection.

Despite its well-recognized limitations, the intersection defies improvement so long as City Dock remains a parking area. The Subcommittee instead recommended a strong traffic control presence to enhance the flow of both cars and people.

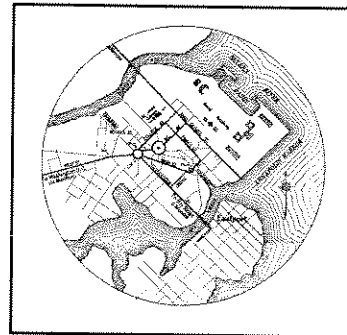
With the aid of staff and consultants, the Subcommittee's recommendations focused on improving the efficiency of the parking area and the interior traffic flow, while adding amenities to the promenade and park that enhance the pedestrian experience. None of the recommended improvements should preclude the future transition of the parking area to open space should a parking alternative be identified. Additionally, a footprint for future expansion of the Harbormaster's facility is identified and the public slips are redesigned to allow for wider vessels.

B. Recommendations

(See Annapolis City Dock Plan and detail sheets, ERM, December, 2002)

1. **Establish traffic/pedestrian flow control** at the crosswalk between the Market House and City Dock and at the intersection of Dock and Randall Streets during high use periods. The current circumstance where pedestrians cross Randall Street at will often creates extensive automobile backups across the Spa Creek Bridge into Eastport. Pedestrian crossings may best be regulated with traffic guards or control lights that could coordinate movements across Randall Street at both the Market House/City Dock and Middleton's Tavern/Steven's Hardware crosswalks. The number of automobile turning movements at the Dock/Randall Street intersection may be decreased with signage that encourages exiting from the parking area at Craig Street to the signalized Randall/Prince George Street intersection. Other considerations subject to traffic analysis: no left turn during peak use periods from Dock Street onto Randall Street; controlled right turn from Dock Street onto Randall Street coordinated with the traffic light at the Randall/Prince George Street intersection.

2. At the head of the Market Slip opposite the Alex Haley monument, an **historical map of Annapolis is replicated in the sidewalk** in flamed granite paving. The Subcommittee felt that the pedestrian experience should include historical references, and this location - opposite the Alex Haley monument - is effectively the entrance to the City Dock and is a most appropriate reference point. An **historic marker** was also recommended for the mid point of the promenade to indicate the former prominence of the City Dock in the Chesapeake fishing industry. The promenade will be realigned and reconstructed as a continuous 16 ft. wide brick walkway from the head of the Market Slip to the end of the City Dock.



3. **The number of parking spaces is increased** by reconfiguring the layout of the entire parking area. Parking spaces are marked with granite pavers instead of paint striping with the pavers inset flush to the pavement as it is in the Main Street crosswalk design. Wheel stops will also be granite.
4. The entire area is regraded so **water drains to the center** rather than the edge. This should minimize the area that becomes flooded during high tides. It also allows for a standard 4" curb at the parking area/promenade edge instead of the step of up to 1 ft.
5. **Parking meters are removed** and replaced with a centralized parking payment system, which will add to the attractiveness of the entire area. In particular, the absence of parking meters will add usable width to the sidewalks. A centralized parking system has the added benefit of being less expensive and more efficient to maintain than hundreds of parking meters.

6. **New light poles, trash receptacles and benches** of a design consistent with those on Main Street are appropriately located throughout the design.

7. **Conflicts with the layout of the Boat Shows are minimized.** Light poles are removable and no landscaping or buildings are placed within the boat show footprint. The existing concrete parking islands are eliminated and the parking spaces are delineated with granite pavers flush to the parking area surface. None of the proposed improvements will conflict with the existing show layout of tents and exhibits.



8. **A wide median is located in the lower lot area** (between the Harbormaster building and the Market House) and is planted with large trees. In redesigning the City Dock, emphasis is given to planting trees so as to shade the asphalt and minimize the “heat island” effect. In this location, the wider median and trees create more of a pedestrian friendly street-like appearance for the adjacent retail properties, rather than the current circumstance where the businesses are on the edge of a large parking lot. For the same reasons large trees are also planted in landscape islands adjacent to the businesses between Craig Street and the harbor.
9. Existing **landscape areas adjacent to the Harbormaster building are eliminated** with the reconfiguration of the parking area and proposed expansion of the building, but new landscape areas are created.
10. **The Harbormaster building is expanded** to provide needed additional office space and larger public restrooms. The Subcommittee did not attempt to design the addition, only to establish it’s footprint within the context of the overall City Dock design. There was some discussion, however, as to what the design might include in addition to offices and restrooms. In the drawing included in this plan the roof of the addition is a public observation area. A textured crosswalk of the same materials as the promenade will be located between the Harbormaster facility and the promenade.
11. **The Visitor’s Center is relocated** in the Harbormaster building plaza in a more prominent position. It’s style will mimic the dimensions of the Market House, and together with the enlarged Harbormaster facility, will define a visitor-friendly plaza.

12. **Two small, open pavilions are located on the pedestrian walkway** between the parking area and the Market Slip, with the outermost of the two servicing the water taxi. Each of these pavilions will have the same dimensions as the new Visitors Center and are placed so as to provide near distant destinations for pedestrians. They will also provide shelter from the weather where there currently is none. Benches will be located so as not to interfere with pedestrian movements through the pavilions.
13. **A larger open pavilion is located between the parking area and Susan B. Campbell Park** at the end of the City Dock and will service tour buses and provide shelter from the weather. The utility booth currently in a parking median will be relocated here, and benches will be added. This pavilion will also have dimensions scaled from the Market House and can be a functional space that can be used, for example, as a seasonal farmer's market.
14. The overall redesign of the City Dock took into consideration two separate design requisites. First, **the bulkhead on the northern side of the market slip (adjacent to the parking lot) must be replaced** as its failure is predicted. At this time, the city's Department of Public Works considers the installation of prefabricated bulkhead sections to be the most feasible construction method. The nature of this construction would necessarily straighten the bulkhead and eliminate the short right angle currently opposite the Harbormaster building, where an oyster house once stood.

Second, **the public slips at the bulkhead are too narrow for today's beamier vessels and need to be removed and replaced at 15 ft widths.** This can be done by eliminating one of the existing slips and redistributing that width to other reconstructed slips. But as it happens, Susan B. Campbell Park is approximately 20 feet out of square at the southwest corner, so the new plan recommends squaring it off and redistributing that extra length to reconstructed slips. In this way there is no decrease in the number of public slips, with the added benefit of increasing the area of the plaza at the point where crowds gather to board the harbor sightseeing vessel. At the end of the plaza, a new 8 ft. wide access pier will be added for use by tour boats.

15. **Susan B. Campbell Park is redesigned as an attractive and functional space.** A frequent comment during the Subcommittee meetings was that the plaza should be a destination in itself, rather than just an open space next to the water. Among the examples of waterfront destinations cited by the Subcommittee were the Charleston, S. C. waterfront with its centrally located water fountain and pedestrian walkway, and the St. Michaels, MD Maritime Museum on the edge of that city's harbor.

The new plan recommends regrading the plaza to slope slightly toward the center with granite cobbles in a geometric floral design. Removable benches are placed around the edges of the "petals" that would allow people to sit facing toward the plaza center. At the center of the plaza would be the existing Chesapeake Bay Gateway display. Within the floral pattern would be several dry deck fountains that shoot an adjustable column of water which can be easily walked through without getting wet, or it can be a play area.

The intention is to create an area that people would enjoy being in while still retaining it's status as a visual point of reference for the city harbor and the Chesapeake Bay.

As a complement to the Gateway display at the plaza center, the edge of the floral pattern is a granite band in which are inscriptions of the names of the many historic vessels that have at one time or another graced the Annapolis harbor.

An area of the easternmost corner of the plaza is delineated for the Naval Academy Band summer concert series.

After much discussion, the Subcommittee recommended that the existing trees in the center of the plaza be removed in the new design for several reasons: they are planted in oyster shell and debris and are therefore perpetually stunted and must be annually fertilized to maintain their vigor; they interfere with the Navy Band concerts as well as the boat shows; as vertical elements at the edge of the harbor they block sight lines from virtually all angles, including the Harbormaster's view of the harbor; they would most likely fair poorly, if not die, from the reconstruction of the dock.

The Subcommittee also recommended the removal of the existing linear planter at the edge between the plaza and the parking area. While it is an attractively landscaped area, it restricts the area available for loading and unloading of busses. Because they carry a large number of people, the busses are forced to park away from the planter into the driving lane in order to have the space to load and unload, thereby creating congestion in an area where unrestricted traffic flow is critical. Placing a new pavilion in approximately the same location and new surface-level landscape areas better define the edge of the plaza while allowing additional space for vehicle loading/unloading and pedestrian movements.

Recognizing that the trees and landscaped planter have benefits, the Subcommittee recommended design amenities that would compensate for their loss. The large pavilion, as discussed earlier, would provide a pedestrian shade haven and the new surface-level landscaping would be larger in area than the planter to be removed. Using lighter paving to contrast the plaza design not only is aesthetically pleasing, it absorbs less solar heat than the existing darker pavers. And, while eight trees would be removed, at least twelve trees would be added in the overall design.

C. Summary

The overall impact of the new design emphasizes the pedestrian experience along the water's edge, and can be considered an integral part of a continuous shoreline pathway system from the Naval Academy, through the City Dock, along Compromise Street and across the Spa Creek Bridge to the Eastport peninsula. The retail edge of the parking area also receives better pedestrian amenities with the removal of parking meters to effectively widen the sidewalk and trees to shade and provide a visual barrier between businesses and parking.

While some traffic issues associated with the parking area are at this time unresolvable, the new design makes parking more efficiently controlled and aesthetically attractive. The visual ambience of the renovated Main Street is continued around the edge of City Dock to Susan B. Campbell Park and the park at the end of Prince George Street with the use of similar bricks and sidewalk patterns, lamps, benches and trash receptacles. Pavilions for shade and a prominent new Visitor's Center - with architectural lines scaled from the Market House - are positioned for efficient use and aesthetic value. References to Annapolis' rich history are displayed throughout the design.

The new design also considers the City Dock's use as a public amenity for boaters, and delineates a footprint for an expansion of the Harbormaster building, a new bulkhead, wider public slips, and shelter for users of the water taxi.

The uses of the City Dock have changed since the early days of Annapolis when it was established as a focus for water borne commerce. As the need for those uses declined, the City Dock has become the entry way for pedestrians, automobiles and boats into the historic center of the old colonial city, and a platform for community services and public events. This redesign of City Dock addresses these multiple - and often conflicting - interests to create a more efficient, integrated, and attractive space.